

Eshoo Statement Opposing Iraq War Escalation

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[Video]

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, spoke on the House floor today in support of H.Con.Res. 63, a bipartisan resolution expressing support for our troops and disapproving the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq.

"Madam Speaker, it has been a long and painful four-year journey for the people of our country since this Administration acted preemptively and unilaterally to invade and occupy Iraq, policies which I believed then and I still believe today would not and could not stand because they simply are not in our national character.

"We were told Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. None were found.

"We were told there was 'yellow cake.' It was a falsehood.

"We were told that there were trailers containing the evidence of deadly chemicals.

"We were told the mission was accomplished.

"We endured national and international shame when the horrific pictures depicting Abu Ghraib appeared.

"We learned that our troops were not sufficiently equipped.

"We mourned with our constituents as the death toll of American troops mounted and continued to mount. Just think, 137 casualties in November of 2004, then the deadliest month overall. Today, over 3,000 precious U.S. lives have been lost, with thousands maimed and injured, and God knows how many innocent Iraqi lives lost.

"We witnessed the world community's total support on 9/11, and we've witnessed the diminishment of America's credibility around the world because of the Iraq war.

"We've heard the President and Vice President talk about victory and an insurgency in its last throes.

"We've learned of manipulated intelligence and endured a no-oversight Congress.

"Preemptive war, unilateralism, invasion, occupation, no postwar plan, an insurgency born of our blunders, and arrogance instead of reality.

"Meanwhile, military experts...Generals Abizaid, Odom, Powell...and distinguished civilian leaders have called for change...a new strategy, and the urgency of diplomatic and political engagement.

"All to no avail.

"One of the central findings of the recent NIE, the National Intelligence Estimate, highlighted the lack of effective Iraqi leadership as a main component driving sectarian and communal violence.

"The bipartisan Iraqi Study Group, appointed by the President, reported the utter urgency of action by the Administration.

"Retired General William Odom, former Director of the National Security Agency under President Reagan and member of

the National Security Council under President Carter wrote an Op-Ed in the Washington Post on February 11th. He identified the shortcomings of the Administration's Iraq policy and presented some of the clearest and most prescient thinking on the issue to date.

"He places in stark relief what many of our Colleagues refuse to accept: That the preemptive, unilateral course set by the President is not a strategy for success in Iraq. He says, and I quote:

" 'The first and most critical step is to recognize that fighting on now simply prolongs our losses and blocks the way to a new strategy. Getting out of Iraq is the pre-condition for creating new strategic options. Withdrawal will take away the conditions that allow our enemies in the region to enjoy our pain...

" 'Second, we must recognize that the United States alone cannot stabilize the Middle East.

" 'Third, we must acknowledge that most of our policies are actually destabilizing the region. Spreading democracy, using sticks to try to prevent nuclear proliferation, threatening 'regime change,' using the hysterical rhetoric of the 'global war on terrorism' - all undermine the stability we so desperately need in the Middle East.

" 'Fourth, we must redefine our purpose. It must be a stable region, not primarily a democratic Iraq. We must redirect our military operations so they enhance rather than undermine stability.'

"So many experts, so many respected leaders, so many voices of patriots and their critical analysis ignored.

"Madam Speaker, in the preamble to our Constitution three magnificent words lead the document...WE THE PEOPLE.

"The people of our nation made the clearest and most important solemn judgment on Iraq in last November's election.

"They said in overwhelming numbers to change the direction of this war...to de-escalate, not escalate.

"That's exactly what this debate is about.

"We pay tribute to and support our troops who honor our country with their service.

"We say...as the American people have said...enough is enough.

"I urge my colleagues to vote for this Resolution."

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